

www.r7.fws.gov/planning and concerning the refuge at <http://refuges.fws.gov>.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: By Federal law (National Wildlife Refuge System Administration Act of 1966, as amended by the National Wildlife Refuge System Improvement Act of 1997 (Administration Act) [16 U.S.C. 668dd-668ee]), the Service is to manage all lands within the National Wildlife Refuge System in accordance with an approved Comprehensive Conservation Plan. Section 304(g) of the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (Pub. L. 96-487, 94 Stat. 2371) also directs that these plans be prepared. The Plan guides management decisions and identifies Refuge goals, long-range objectives, and strategies for achieving Refuge purposes. During the planning process, the planning team reviews a wide range of Refuge administrative requirements, including conservation of the refuge's fish and wildlife populations and habitats in their natural diversity; facilitation of subsistence use by local residents and access for traditional recreational activities; and conservation of resource values, including cultural resources, wilderness, and wild rivers. The final revised Plan will detail the programs, activities, and measures necessary to best administer the Refuge to protect these values and to fulfill Refuge purposes. In this Comprehensive Conservation Plan and associated Environmental Impact Statement, the Service will describe and evaluate a range of reasonable alternatives and the anticipated impacts of each. Public input into the planning process is essential.

The Plan will provide other agencies and the public with information to facilitate understanding of the desired conditions for the Refuge and how the Service will implement management strategies.

The Service will prepare an Environmental Impact Statement in accordance with procedures for implementing the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (42 U.S.C. 4321-4370d).

The Kanuti National Wildlife Refuge lies on the Arctic Circle about 100 miles south of the Brooks Range and 150 miles northwest of Fairbanks, Alaska. The Refuge lies in a basin formed by the Koyukuk and Kanuti rivers and encompasses approximately 1.6 million acres. The Refuge landscape consists of rolling hills, wetlands, ponds, and streams. It supports waterfowl, furbearers, wolves, moose, caribou, and bears.

The Alaska National Interests Land Conservation Act (ANILCA) of 1980 (Section 302[4][B]) established the Refuge and stated that the purposes for which the Kanuti Refuge was established and would be managed include:

(i) To conserve fish and wildlife populations and habitats in their natural diversity including, but not limited to, white-fronted geese and other waterfowl and migratory birds, moose, caribou (including participation in coordinated ecological studies and management of the Western Arctic caribou herd), and furbearers;

(ii) To fulfill the international treaty obligation of the United States with respect to fish and wildlife and their habitats;

(iii) To provide, in a manner consistent with the purposes set forth in subparagraphs (i) and (ii), the opportunity for continued subsistence uses by local residents; and

(iv) To ensure, to the maximum extent practicable and in a manner consistent with the purposes set forth in paragraph (i), water quality and necessary water quantity within the refuge.

The Comprehensive Conservation Plan for Kanuti was completed in 1987. It is being revised consistent with Section 304(g) of the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act, the National Wildlife Refuge System Improvement Act of 1997, and Service planning policy.

Dated: November 7, 2003.

Rowan Gould,

Regional Director, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Anchorage, Alaska.

[FR Doc. 03-29302 Filed 11-25-03; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4310-55-P

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Fish and Wildlife Service

Notice of Intent To Revise a Comprehensive Conservation Plan and Associated Environmental Impact Statement for the Kenai National Wildlife Refuge, Soldotna, AK

AGENCY: Fish and Wildlife Service, Department of the Interior.

ACTION: Notice of intent.

SUMMARY: This notice advises the public that the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) intends to gather information necessary to revise the Comprehensive Conservation Plan (Plan) and an associated Environmental Impact Statement, pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act and its implementing regulations, for the Kenai

National Wildlife Refuge, Soldotna, Alaska. The Service is furnishing this notice in compliance with the National Wildlife Refuge System Administration Act of 1966, as amended, and with Service planning policy to advise other agencies and the public of our intentions and to obtain suggestions and information on the scope of issues to be addressed in the environmental documents.

Special mailings, newspaper articles, and other media announcements will inform people of opportunities to provide written input throughout the planning process. Public meetings will be held in communities near the Refuge (e.g., Cooper Landing, Soldotna, Seward, and Homer) and in the city of Anchorage. The Draft and Final Plans and associated Environmental Impact Statement will be available for viewing and downloading at <http://www.r7.fws.gov/planning>.

ADDRESSES: Address comments, questions, and requests to Rob Campellone, Planning Team Leader, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, 1011 East Tudor Rd., MS-231, Anchorage, AK 99503, or fw7_kenai_planning@fws.gov.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION, CONTACT: Rob Campellone, Planning Team Leader, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, 1011 East Tudor Rd. MS-231, Anchorage, AK 99503 or fw7_kenai_planning@fws.gov. Additional information concerning the Plan can be found at <http://www.r7.fws.gov/planning> and concerning the Refuge at <http://refuges.fws.gov>.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: By Federal law (National Wildlife Refuge System Administration Act of 1966, as amended by the National Wildlife Refuge System Improvement Act of 1997 (Administration Act) [16 U.S.C. 668dd-668ee]), all lands within the National Wildlife Refuge System are to be managed in accordance with an approved Comprehensive Conservation Plan. Section 304(g) of the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (Pub. L. 96-487, 94 Stat. 2371) also directs that these plans be prepared. During the planning process, the planning team reviews a wide range of Refuge administrative requirements, including conservation of the Refuge's fish and wildlife populations and habitats in their natural diversity; facilitation of subsistence use by local residents and access for traditional recreational activities; and conservation of resource values, including cultural resources, wilderness, and wild rivers.

The final revised Plan will detail the programs, activities, and measures

necessary to best administer the Refuge to protect these values and to fulfill Refuge purposes. The Comprehensive Conservation Plan and associated Environmental Impact Statement will describe and evaluate a range of reasonable alternatives and the anticipated impacts of each. Public input into the planning process is essential.

The Plan will provide other agencies and the public with information to facilitate understanding of the desired conditions for the Refuge and how the Service will implement management strategies.

The Service will prepare an Environmental Impact Statement in accordance with procedures for implementing the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (42 U.S.C. 4321–4370d).

The Kenai National Wildlife Refuge covers approximately two million acres, roughly equivalent to the states of Delaware and Rhode Island combined. It occupies much of the Kenai Peninsula and is readily accessible from the city of Anchorage, which contains 41.5 percent of the state's population. The Kenai Refuge consists of the western slopes of the Kenai Mountains and forested lowlands bordering Cook Inlet. The Kenai Mountains, with their glaciers, rise to more than 6,500 feet. Treeless alpine and subalpine habitats are the home of mountain goats, Dall sheep, caribou, wolverine, marmots, and ptarmigan. Boreal forests extend to 1,800 feet above sea level and are composed of spruce and birch forests intermingled with hundreds of lakes. Boreal forests are home to moose, wolves, black and brown bears, lynx, snowshoe hares, and numerous species of neotropical birds such as olive-sided flycatchers, myrtle warblers, and ruby-crowned kinglets. At sea level, the Refuge encompasses the last remaining pristine major salt water estuary on the Kenai Peninsula: the Chickaloon River Flats. The flats provide a major migratory staging area and nesting habitat for thousands of shorebirds and waterfowl throughout the spring, summer, and fall. The flats are also used as a haul-out area by harbor seals, and thousands of salmon migrate up the Chickaloon River system each year to spawn.

The Alaska National Interests Land Conservation Act of 1980 (Section 303[4]) sets forth the following major purposes for which the Kenai Refuge was established and is to be managed:

(i) To conserve fish and wildlife populations and habitats in their natural diversity including, but not limited to,

moose, bear, mountain goats, Dall sheep, wolves and other furbearers, salmonoids and other fish, waterfowl and other migratory and nonmigratory birds;

(ii) To fulfill the international treaty obligations of the United States with respect to fish and wildlife and their habitats;

(iii) To ensure, to the maximum extent practicable and in a manner consistent with the purposes set forth in paragraph (i), water quality and necessary water quantity within the Refuge;

(iv) To provide in a manner consistent with subparagraphs (i) and (ii), opportunities for scientific research, interpretation, environmental education, and land management training; and

(v) To provide, in a manner compatible with these purposes, opportunities for fish and wildlife-oriented recreation.

The Comprehensive Conservation Plan for Kenai National Wildlife Refuge was completed in 1985. It is being revised consistent with Section 304(g) of the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act, the National Wildlife Refuge System Improvement Act of 1997, and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service planning policy.

Dated: November 7, 2003.

Rowan Gould,

Regional Director, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Anchorage, Alaska.

[FR Doc. 03–29303 Filed 11–25–03; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4310–55–P

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Fish and Wildlife Service

Notice of Availability of a Final Supplement and Amendment to the 1998 Final Revised Sonoran Pronghorn Recovery Plan—Recovery Criteria and Estimates of Time for Recovery Actions for the Sonoran Pronghorn

AGENCY: Fish and Wildlife Service, Interior.

ACTION: Notice of document availability.

SUMMARY: The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) announces the availability of a Final Supplement and Amendment to the 1998 Final Revised Sonoran Pronghorn (*Antilocapra americana sonoriensis*) Recovery Plan (Recovery Plan). In the U.S., the species is currently known to occur on Federal lands in Maricopa, Pima, and Yuma counties in southwestern Arizona. The Final Supplement and Amendment reassesses recovery criteria from the

Recovery Plan, relates recovery actions to the five listing factors of the Endangered Species Act of 1973, and assigns a timeline to recovery actions.

ADDRESSES: Persons wishing to obtain a copy of the Final Supplement and Amendment may do so by accessing the Service's Arizona Ecological Service Field Office internet web page at Arizonaes.fws.gov or contacting John Morgart, Cabeza Prieta National Wildlife Refuge, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, 1611 North Second Avenue, Ajo, Arizona 85321 (520/387–4989 Direct; 520/387–6483 Refuge Office; 520/387–5359 Fax; john_morgart@fws.gov e-mail).

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: John Morgart (see ADDRESSES).

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Background

Restoring an endangered or threatened animal or plant species to the point where it is again a secure, self-sustaining member of its ecosystem is a primary goal of the Service's endangered species program. To help guide the recovery effort, the Service prepares recovery plans for most of the listed species native to the United States. Recovery plans describe actions considered necessary for conservation of species, including criteria for downlisting or delisting, and time and cost estimates for implementing the recommended recovery measures.

In a recent court decision (Civil Action No. 99–927 (ESH)), the judge ruled that the 1998 Final Revised Sonoran Pronghorn Recovery Plan “* * * fails to establish (1) objective measurable criteria which, when met, would result in a determination that the pronghorn may be removed from the list of endangered species or, if such criteria are not practicable, an explanation of that conclusion and (2) estimates of the time required to carry out those measures needed to achieve the plan's goal and to achieve intermediate steps toward that goal where practicable, or, if such estimates are not practicable, an explanation of that conclusion.” The Court ordered the Service to reconsider these portions of the Recovery Plan. The deadline for completion of this task was extended three times, with a final deadline of January 15, 2002.

The Endangered Species Act of 1973 (Act), as amended (16 U.S.C. 1531 *et seq.*), requires the development of recovery plans for listed species unless such a plan would not promote the conservation of a particular species. section 4(f) of the Act, as amended in 1988, requires that public notice and an opportunity for public review and